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937

How to Organize a Church Federation

It seems essential that very simple practical suggestions be made as to the methods of forming a local Church Federation. The procedure is the same whether the organization be for town, county, city, or state.

There must first be adequate leadership. It is also imperative that no time be lost by needless experimentation. Many counties, cities, and states have effective Federations of Churches which have, as a central clearing house, the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America. This national Church Federation being a fact, the formation of a Local Federation is but the local application of the modern principle of federal union as expressed by both the commonwealths and the churches of the American nation.

It is recommended that those who seek to form local federations secure co-opera-

tion with national and state leaders for the plans which have stood repeated tests. This applies especially to model constitutions. It may also prove helpful to co-operate with speakers of practical experience to guide in the preliminary steps of forming new federations.

The process of organization is as follows:

Three meetings are customary for the work.

The first of these is the Preliminary Conference at which the needs of the community and churches and the purpose and plan of organization are thorougly discussed. A committee is appointed to draw up a Constitution to be reported at the next meeting.

The second meeting, which shall have been authorized and appointed by the first, is known as the Organizing Conference. At this it is well to have present, as far as possible, persons from all the denominations or congregations which it is proposed to federate. The call should mention the number of persons to represent each denomination or congregation. At least one-half of these official delegates should be laymen. These should settle upon the Constitution which they wish to

have adopted for the government of the Federation when it is fully formed. Those who meet in response to this call should not hesitate to proceed with the organization because all invited may not have responded.

It shall be the business of this Organizing Conference to send for officia ratification and adoption, to the various congregations, conferences, conventions, synods or other church meetings, the Constitution which has been formed or selected. It is also the business of this Organizing Conference to ask the same congregations, conferences, conventions, synods, or other church meetings to elect official representative delegates to the next meeting which is to complete the organization of the Federation.

The third and final meeting for organizing purposes is, in reality, the First Meeting of the Federation. The new comprehensive, interdenominational organization is now fully formed and is in readiness to begin its real organic life and service in behalf of the entire community or state, according to the resources and leadership which it can command. The methods of organizing and conducting a Federation are identical, whatever the units federated may be. This, however, does not apply to

One-Minister Federations of churches in country villages.

It is desirable that each Federation should make at the outset provision for the necessary expenses of some form of permanent executive leadership.

In communities where Ministers' Associations, Federations of Church Brotherhoods, Evangelistic Campaigns, Men and Religion Conservation Committees, or other co-operative community movements are in the field, the work of federating the Churches should take into consideration these movements as temporary or partial phases or potential committees of the substantial, inclusive and abiding work of a Church Federation, the distinctive character of which is to represent and promote perpetually the religious and moral life and welfare of the entire community.

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